

SC

SONNING COMMON MAGAZINE



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A LIFE WELL LIVED

JOHN LAMBOURNE
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FEB/MAR 2020



sonningcommonmagazine

www.sonningcommonmagazine.org



Free Equity Release and Later Life Planning Seminars

Box Financial Planning will be running a series of free seminars covering the main aspects of Equity Release* and Later Life Planning at Sonning Common Village Hall during 2020, with the first one proposed for the Spring of 2020 (April or May 2020).

Further details will be released shortly and full information can be found at www.box-financial-planning.co.uk.

For those attending the seminars, there will be time after the presentations to have an informal chat and free refreshments will be provided.

In the interim, if you have any Pension, Investment, Mortgage, Protection or associated advice needs or would like to arrange a confidential meeting, please contact us for a free and without obligation financial discussion.

* To understand the features and risks ask for a personalised illustration

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FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

2020 and we start the year with at the very least, a less uncertain future. The first hurdle of Brexit is decided and the lengthy and protracted discussions will roll on and on ...

Our community has celebrated an amazing charity giving Christmas and although it will have faded from our thoughts, I hope some of the lovely photos will trigger happy memories.

There are sad memories as well, with the death of four members of our community who contributed a great deal to village life in a variety of ways. While these appreciations were being edited it struck me that there are many, many people in this village who currently make a significant contribution and their stories could be shared. If you know such a person please let me know (assuming they give their permission).

There are many events arranged for the dark days ahead and publicised on the Noticeboard and elsewhere in this issue. It would be very sad if residents felt very alone when there is so much on offer locally. Lots of variety of article appear in this issue, from how Highways work, the Eco update, Health Centre matters, no dig organic garden production and if you are into amdram Chiltern Players would love you to get involved. The regulars will entertain us and as usual Tom makes me laugh.

Comments on the new puzzle page have been very positive and in this issue Sheila Walker is challenging our brains. She will share the task with David Dunstan so they will write for alternate issues. ●

Diana

Diana Pearman Editor

Email: editor@sonningcommonmagazine.org

MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM ...



Diana Pearman



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FEB/MAR 2020

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Xplor Ltd
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07766 254422
0118 9471955

Cover image: John Lambourne

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JOHN LAMBOURNE

An edited version of the tribute to John, written and delivered by Jill Harbridge, celebrant at his memorial service.

John was Independent, selfless, hardworking, sociable, kind, caring and funny, both intentionally and unintentionally on occasion. John was a one of life's big characters and the boots he leaves will be hard to fill.

John was keen on all sports but particular favourites were football and athletics especially hurdling at which he excelled. He represented the school at County level and was invited for trials at Oxford United.

An interest in tractors became evident early on, Peter his brother, remembers John entering a comic competition which involved the pair of them cycling around Oxfordshire collecting plate numbers from Massey Fergusons. Their efforts paid off as John won the competition and the prize of a box camera.

John and Carole married in 1966, cup final day, (Everton won). Together John and Carole went on to have two children, Gary and Mark, and in time six grandsons, Ben, Zak, Jay, Jude, Jamie and Sam who all have fond, happy and funny memories of their Grandad who could always make them laugh.

John played 25 seasons for the local Peppard Football team during which time he had an unblemished record of exemplary conduct on and off the pitch

even while he continued supporting his son's games as linesman. When Rotherfield Football pitches came up for sale, he and many other locals lobbied hard for the option to purchase at a more reasonable sum. Thanks to their efforts the pitches were acquired and secured for use by future generations.

Having completed his training at agricultural college and an apprenticeship under the guidance of Percy Collins, Percy and John set up Collins and Lambourne, an Agricultural Engineering company, which John ran for 43 years.

John was also an active supporter of the Tractor runs, initially starting out as pub crawl by tractor, John being John had to elevate things to the next level and soon there were Hen and Stag runs, Summer solstice trips, rides for school as well as St Georges and Remembrance Day outings. Much pleasure given to many people and satisfaction to John.

Many residents will have admired the Christmas lights display that John constructed in his front garden. Starting with just a few decorations John grew the display over many years, making many of them himself. Over the years £13K has been raised all of which has gone to support the work of Great Ormond Street Hospital. This was just one of his many fund-raising events.

John never lost touch with his inner child and laughter, fun and chaos on occasion were never far away. Even during his final hospital stay John continued to liven up the ward, still winking at the nurses!

Sonning Common has lost a valued member of its community - he will be missed. ●



Another example of John's support for the village. As far as I can remember, it appeared unexpectedly on the day we were being judged for our Britain In Bloom entry and gave our efforts a welcome added boost. I am sure that the judges had seen nothing like it from the other entrants!

STAN RUST

CAROL SINGING IN JOHN'S NAME

Every year John's lights amazed us all. I used to walk my family round on Christmas Day. They were so special. John put so much effort in for all our enjoyment and raised so much money for an amazing charity Great Ormond Street.

Sadly, John lost his own battle with leukaemia, so no more lights.

I really want to try and continue something Christmas related in his name for this amazing charity, so what better than carol singing! We will be singing to as many homes as we can to raise money but if you're not local or can't make it to join us sing please give what you can on this page.

Thank you so much for your time and Generosity. Currently the money raised is over £1,000.

<https://www.justgiving.com/Johnsamazinglights>

VANESSA STOWELL



THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

"Nottakwire would like to thank all those who supported its fund-raising "Carols Event" on Saturday 7 December 2019.

A very enjoyable and successful afternoon was had by all involved - and the sum of £486 was raised. We added a little and have made the following donations:

£150 to Sonning Common Youth Club

£150 to Friends of Sonning Common Library

£200 to the Sonning Common Magazine.

We may well be holding some free, open sessions during 2020 - so watch out for dates when you will be invited to come and sing along with us ●

MARGARET MOOLA



UNEXPECTED MENTION!

DIANA PEARMAN

Our daughter was in her car listening to radio 2 on Christmas morning. Lo and behold Sonning Common was mentioned, praising the volunteers who were working in the Village Hall to welcome over 30 guests to Christmas Lunch. Sonning Common is on the map!!

This amazing event, organised by Sandy Onofrio was a very enjoyable occasion. Sandy had gathered a very efficient team together to chauffeur, cook, serve and wash up a turkey dinner, Christmas pudding and trifle. The generosity of local businesses was outstanding providing wine, chocolates, dates, decorated

gingerbread and more so guests departed laden with gifts. Kidmore End donated all the gifts from their advent calendar telephone box. The WI had decorated the hall, there was Christmas music, games and a quiz. A surprise visit from Santa, still working despite his busy night, and was there to represent South Oxfordshire Tractor Society who very kindly returned the price of the meal to all the guests.

Everyone left with a smile on their faces which says it all.

Now in its 10th year, originally set up by Chrissie Godfrey and Jill Vallis, this event is appreciated by many residents. It has become part of a tradition in this community minded village. ●



SANTA RIDES AGAIN!

On Thursday 19 December 2019, Santa visited Sonning Common pulled on his sleigh by a tractor driven by Jordon Johnstone. But this year there was something different, instead of a decorated trailer with hay bales, Santa and his elf (Richard MacKenzie Black) had a fantastic illuminated red sleigh! This was made possible by the kind donations of materials from Peppard Building Supplies and the creativity of Certain Exhibitions along with Paul Jenkins and his paint brush. The reindeers were

painted by Craig and Kirstin Henderson and Ray and Caroline Miles. There were also donations from Heath and Watkins and Johnson Matthey.

Last year the event raised over £800 for local charities, but this year we raised a whopping **£1,522.29** for the First Responders Sonning Common and Sonning Common Youth Club.

A team of 22 volunteers from the village walked a few miles on the cold, rather damp evening while sheet lightning filled the sky, to collect donations, give out stickers and chocolates which were kindly donated. A big thank you to all who

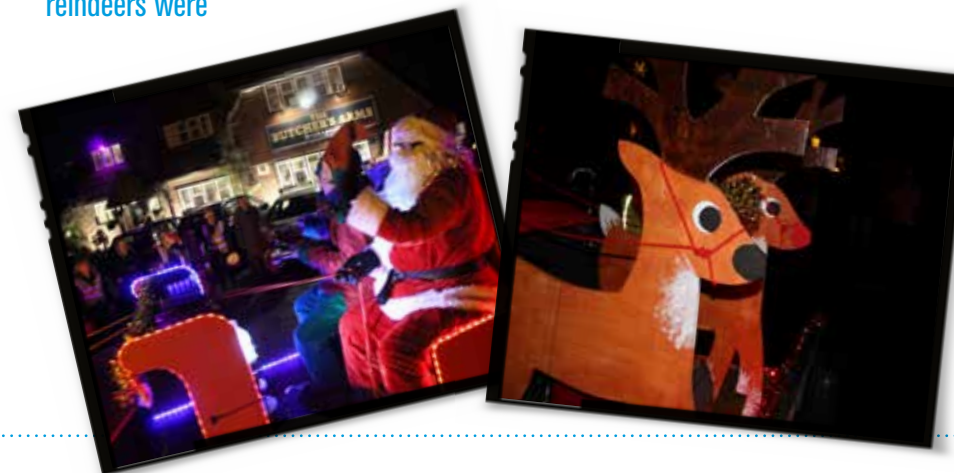
helped, we couldn't do it without you and hope to see you again next year.

Our final stop was at the Butchers Arms, who provided mince pies and mulled wine and a refreshing drink for Santa.

We would like to bring Santa back again for 2020 and if you would like to be part of the team please get in touch with Helen Coyne at teamsantasc@gmail.com or via the Facebook group <https://facebook.com/socosantaclaus/>.

Thank you once again Sonning Common for making this a wonderfully successful evening. ●

HELEN COYNE



STOP PRESS
NDP meeting
Saturday 29 February 2020
11 to 2pm
Looking at new housing sites
Your views are needed

ANDREW HARTLEY APPOINTED NEW HEADTEACHER

To become a Headteacher is both a privilege and an honour and I am so pleased and excited to have been appointed Headteacher of Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge (MECE).

MECE has been through a turbulent period in recent years but it is clear that progress is now tangible and the school, under the sponsorship of Maiden Erlegh Trust, is moving rapidly in the right direction. My journey to MECE has been lengthy and



varied. I have been Deputy Headteacher at Brakenhale School in Bracknell since September 2015. Brakenhale has had a long history of low achievement and poor behaviour however as part of a team we have transformed the school beyond recognition. A huge waiting list, a very positive OFSTED report (with three Outstanding categories out of five) and results that have improved beyond recognition. The experience I have gained as a part of this team will be invaluable in the journey I want to take MECE on over the next few years. Prior to this I was Assistant Headteacher at The Downs School in Compton where, as Post 16 leader I oversaw seven years of incredible results with many students securing places at Oxbridge and Russell Group universities.

My values and philosophy towards education are simple. I believe that every student is capable of great work and making the right



choices. I will be working hard to inculcate an aspirational mind-set into all students whilst ensuring those who need extra support and opportunity can access this. Furthermore, I believe that teaching and learning must be of the highest quality and will be working tirelessly with staff to ensure the quality of lessons remain high at all times. I want to make MECE the first choice for the local community and look forward to working for you and with you to achieve this.

ANDREW HARTLEY

**Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge, Reades Lane, Sonning Common, Reading, RG4 9LN
www.maidenerleghchilternedge.co.uk
Telephone: 0118 9721500**

We warmly invite visits from parents who are considering Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge and who would like to see the school on a normal working day. Please contact the school office to arrange an appointment.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE GREEN AGENDA



We have just started the Co-op food share scheme where every weekday morning I go into the SC Co-op and they give us a snack for the day. The children have a wide variety, as each day is different, and it also means there is less food waste from the Co-op, and it saves us between £40-£50 per week on snacks. We are also collecting food pouches and cleaning product packaging, through Terracycle. We have purchased some new scuttle bugs for our U3's, a dark den with sensory lights, and a sensory bubble tube. We have also bought two iPads for our online learning journal, meaning staff have more time with the children, as well as helping us become as paper free as possible. ●

CLARE SAUNDERS

GRANDFATHER BUILDS NEW BIKE SHED FOR SONNING COMMON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Twenty bikes will now be stored safely at Sonning Common Primary School thanks to Cliff Readings, of Guardian Fencing Southern in Reading following the build of a bespoke bike shed. Cliff, whose grandchildren go to the school, worked on the project over the summer holidays.

The timber building paid for by money raised by the school's parent-teacher association's summer fair and colour run will house 20 bikes thanks to racks supplied by A W Cycles of Caversham, who support the annual On Your Bike event which starts and ends at the school and encourages riders to cycle six, twelve or twenty miles.

Rob Bowen, Managing Director of A W Cycles said: "I am really pleased to see so many bikes here on such a rainy day".

SCPS Association Chairwoman Amy O'Connor said: "We're really pleased with it — it's a lovely structure.

"We realised there was a demand for more space earlier this year because our old shed was needed for storage."

Pupils from the school decorated the interior of the shed with an image of marine life made from old plastic bottle caps. The school is also collecting rainwater by connecting a water butt to the shed's drainpipe. This will be used to water plants in the school garden.

On Your Bike 2020 will be held on Sunday 29 March 2020. ●

LAUREN APPLEBY



LIBRARY EVENTS

1st and 3rd **Mondays** of the month at 10 – 10.30am: Rhymetime for babies and pre-school children

Thursday mornings: In February the Digital Helper Volunteers will be running information sessions at the library to help patients wishing to use Patient Access Online and/or the NHS App. (For more information see the Health page in this issue) These sessions will be on Thursday mornings from 10am - 11.30am. (Other times can be arranged)

Phone the library on 0118 972 2448 to book your place. It is essential to have registered for Online Services at the Health Centre first: please bring the

codes you are given to your library session.

There will be access to a computer, or bring your own tablet, laptop or smartphone.

Friday mornings: the Scrabble Club meets every Friday at 10am, and on the last Friday of the month there is a meeting for Crafters (bring your own project to work on)

Saturday mornings: we have storytimes at 10am every Saturday, and there will be a 'special' storytime with crafts and home-made cakes for sale on 21 March (to celebrate Mothering Sunday next day)



Digital Helper Volunteers and learners enjoying a Christmas treat

On 19 December the Digital Helper volunteers, Rachel Poole from Age UK, and some of those whom they have helped enjoyed seasonal refreshments to celebrate another very successful year at the Library.

A GREAT RUN UP TO CHRISTMAS



We've made snow globes, Christmas cards, had nerf wars (which was so much fun), done lots of baking and had amazing Christmas parties through generous donation from Nottakwire and Cop. We were very lucky to be invited once again this year to the annual midnight ice skating event which is organised by Oxfordshire Youth. The young people had so much fun. There was a lot of falling over, but no one was hurt they just seem to bounce thankfully!

The new term will bring lots of fun activities including team sports, team building, baking and crafts. We will also be going on a trip, venue to be decided by the young people. This can happen

as the Santa Tractor Run raised over £1,400 of which we got half, so a brilliant trip is planned with the money, along with updating some equipment.

Feel free to come along on Tuesday for years 9-11 from 7-9pm or Wednesday for years 6-8 from 6.30-8.30pm. Find us above the sports hall at MECE. We also welcome any aspiring volunteers, who want to help make a difference to the young people in the village just email me on sunny.clubsc@gmail.com.

SUNNY SMITHERS



FoSCL

A hardy band of supporters turned out for the FoSCL AGM in November to hear news of the past year. As well as buying £900 worth of new books, funded by our £10 subscription scheme, the committee has also carried out improvements to the library itself. New notice boards have been installed and a sofa is now available - all paid for through our annual quiz and other events.

If you fancy yourself as a bit of a sleuth, then the committee's next event should suit you. The Friends are joining forces with the Chiltern Players for a Murder Mystery Evening on Friday 28 February at the Village Hall. Tickets are on sale at the library and Occasions for £12.50, which includes a fish and chip supper. There'll be a bar providing a drink to wash it down with.

We've sadly said goodbye to one of the stalwarts of the committee, Val Harris - who is standing down. She'll be much missed - as will her rum punch, which has fuelled several Christmas socials. As always, if you fancy giving an hour or two of your time each month to help to keep our library alive, please get in touch. ●

friendsofsonningcommonlibrary@gmail.com

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ageUK Oxfordshire

Late Spring Oxfordshire

Many find that others who have lost a loved one can offer valuable comfort and support...

The Sonning Common 'Late Spring Bereavement Support Group' meet over coffee and cake at FISH Volunteer Centre, Springhill, Kennylands Road, Sonning Common, RG4 9NT every 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month from 2pm to 3.30pm.

7th & 21st January 4th & 18th February
3rd & 17th March 7th & 21st April

If you would value the opportunity to meet with others who understand... please contact Rachel on 07827 235 420 or email latespring@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

You can also visit our website: www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire for more details.



St Michael's, Peppard Road

Free Monthly Snack & Chat Lunch

Come with your friends enjoy a bowl of homemade soup a slice of cake a chat.

No charge.

Place: St Michael's Church hall (next to the petrol station).

Date: Every 3rd Tuesday of the month 18 February and 17 March

Time: 12.30pm.

CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

YOUR LOCAL GARDENING CLUB

ACTIVITIES FOR WINTER/SPRING 2020

Tuesday 14th Jan 7:30pm - Peppard Memorial Hall RG9 5JA
TALK "Chiltern Seeds" by Nina Marshall

Tuesday 11th Feb 2:30pm - Peppard Memorial Hall RG9 5JA
TALK on "Beautiful Borders" by John Negus

Tuesday 10th March 7:30pm - Peppard Memorial Hall RG9 5JA
TALK on "Asters (Symphytorichums) history and propagation" by Jacqueline Aviolet

Saturday 4th April 2:00pm Sonning Common Village Hall RG4 9SL
SPRING SHOW

More information call Colin 07761135535
Membership £6 p.a. - New members welcome
All talks free to Members / Talks cost £2.00 for Non Members

www.cehs.co.uk

Stamps, stamps, stamps

If you enjoy doing research of any kind why not give philately a go? Stamps, Covers (envelopes) Airmails, Postcards all come under its' umbrella and there are so many subjects that can be covered and as much or as little research you want to do will make your collecting much more interesting.

- 12 February** 9 x A4 favourite pages from collections - postcards, stamps, postal history etc.
- 26 February** Auction Viewing - open to non-members (or if unable to get to Bix view on line).
- 11 March** Henley's popular Auction, non-members welcome. There is a coffee interval and time for a chat with members and visiting bidders.
- 25 March** Members from Thatcham Philatelic Society visit Henley to give displays
- Meetings are held the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month at Bix Village Hall at 7.45 p.m.
- Visitors and new members are welcome.
- Further details 01491 681739 or on our website: - www.henleyphilatelic.org.uk

HEALTH WALKS


The Health Walks continue into the Spring. It's a lovely time of year to enjoy a walk in our beautiful local countryside, and if you need company then come and join us!

Health walking is for fitness - and it's friendly, fun and free! The walks are for everyone, whatever their age and ability, and are graded accordingly. Not all of them are fast walks: contact us (see website address below) for advice about which one is best for you. Timetables are available from the Health Centre, the library and the Herb Farm, or at www.sonningcommonhealthwalks.co.uk

Murder Most Fowl

Murder Mystery Supper
A joint library/CP production
At SC Village Hall
Friday 28 February 2020
8 pm

Tickets from Occasions in Sonning Common



Sonning Common Health

Sonning Common Health Centre is celebrating its 50th Anniversary in July 2020.

The Health Centre team would like to invite all former staff to a celebration event on Sunday 28th June 2020. If you or someone you know worked at the Health Centre please let us know your up to date contact details.

You can email Lesley Chambers lesley.chambers2@nhs.net, alternatively call her on 0118 9721615 or leave a message for her at reception.

Sonning Common Women's Institute 

Is Hosting a

COFFEE MORNING

Sonning Common Village Hall

Wednesday 5th February

10.30 - 12 Noon

Thanks to public support last year we are donating money to seven local charities *****

All Welcome - Please join us for a cup of Coffee/Tea and Biscuit and Presentation of Cheques *****

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These sessions will take place, 5:30-6:30pm, at the Millennium Field in Sonning Common on the following dates:


Monday 2nd March 2020
Monday 9th March 2020
Monday 16th March 2020
Monday 23rd March 2020
Monday 30th March 2020
Monday 7th April 2020

It is open to both adults and children but we ask that children under the age of 13 are supervised by an adult please.

COST: £1 per person which will go towards sports equipment which will be used at the Easter and Summer Fun activities we will be running in the village during the school holidays.

For more information contact amanda@activeleaders.co.uk

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK! 

SONNING COMMON VILLAGE XI FIXTURES 2020

DATE	OPPONENTS	VENUE	START
May 3	Nettlebed	A	14.00
10	Ipsden	A	14.00
17	Pangbourne	A	14.00
31	BBC Caversham	Woodcote cc	13.30
June 6/7	Annual Dorset Tour 2020	A	14.00
28	Swyncombe	A	14.00
July 5	Aldermaston	A	13.30
12	Stonor	A	14.00
August 2	Kidmore End CC	A	14.00
9	Hambledon	A	14.00
Friday 14	Pontarddulais CC. Wales	A	13.30
23	Peppard Maharajas	A	13.30
30	Highmoor; R.Choules Memorial Game	A	

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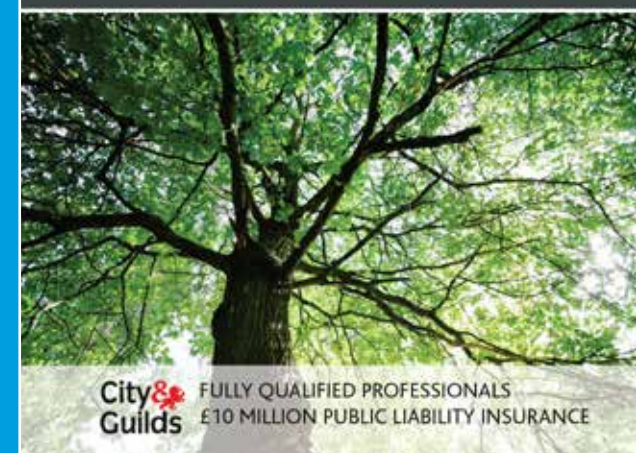
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HIGHWAYS OPEN DAY AT DEDDINGTON

BIG BOYS' TOYS AND DRAGON PATCHERS

By JO STOVES

At the beginning of October, on one of those grey, dank, heavy days when it looked as if it would pour with rain any second, John and I set off for the north of the county. We weren't quite sure what a Highways Open Day would entail, but we had been promised tea and biscuits and the opportunity of seeing a "dragon" in action.

There were about 20 of us in attendance. We were greeted by the Site Manager who explained the wide remit of Highways – not just pot holes! Just some of their responsibilities are:- keeping the carriageways in a good state of repair, the maintenance and repair of some 2,000 highway structures (including bridges [some of listed status], culverts, subways, footbridges and retaining walls), the inspection and maintenance of trees adjacent to highways and those on OCC property (about 1/4 of which are mature) and keeping our roads clear of snow and ice in winter. And, on top of this, last year they handled well over 40,000 customer enquiries and 28,000 requests from utility companies to work on the road network.

We were escorted round the depot to witness some of their key functions with plenty of friendly staff on hand to answer any questions we had. Firstly, the gritters. 28 vehicles from Deddington, Woodcote and Drayton cover the whole of Oxfordshire, working on three hour shifts when the temperature drops.

The two guys painting white lines were formidable. With the aid of a few chalk



lines on the ground and a straight length of wood they created a perfect speed sign. Not a word spoken between them as they worked in perfect harmony. They made it look so easy a few visitors were confident enough to try it for themselves using sand. John's attempt looked more like a sandcastle than an arrow. When he said the "hopper" was heavy, the professional told him it was about twice as heavy when filled with paint.

A group of four operatives demonstrated re-surfacing. They cut away the top surface, sealed the edges and filled the hole with bitumen and rolled it flat. It was quite amazing to see the teamwork – each guy doing his bit without impeding the others.

The Dragon Patcher on the other hand is operated by one person. It uses the



impressive flame to dry out or de-ice the pothole, cleans the surface using compressed air before filling with bitumen and dressing with stones to seal the hole. It's quicker and cheaper to operate, and causes less disruption

than traditional methods but, needless to say, the initial cost is eye watering. Oxfordshire currently has two operational Dragon Patchers.



We watched a wobbly manhole cover being repaired and reinforced, got close up to a barn full of road signs awaiting erection and had the opportunity to see how obstructions in drains could be traced with a specialist vehicle fitted with fibre optic cameras.

Two hours surrounded by what I would previously have considered "big boys' toys" passed surprisingly quickly; although I freely admit that a lot of the facts and figures went in one ear, out of the other and slowly drifted up into the ether never to bother my brain again. If you get the opportunity to meet these guys and get close-up and personal with their amazing machines, I would thoroughly recommend that you give it a go. Like me, you may surprise yourself. ●



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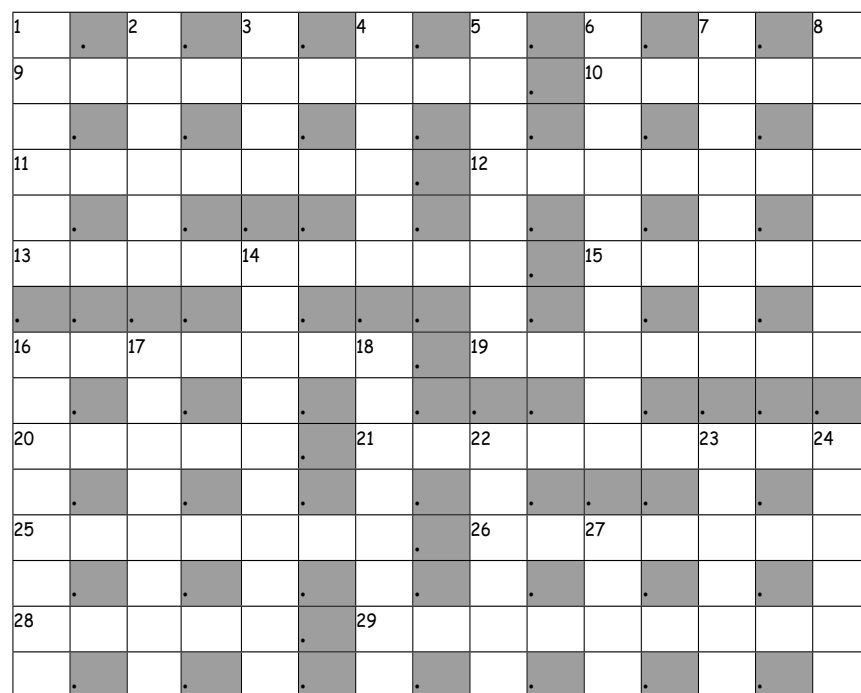
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PUZZLE PAGE

By SHEILA WALKER

WOMBAT 1



ACROSS

- 9 Boy's name in a girl's name (9)
 10 Erica's type of country (5)
 11 Why sombre? It's early days for them yet (7)
 12 Shoddy worker (7)
 13 Sounds like four legs and two at a capital party (9)
 15 Pitched it right (5)
 16 Smart man - but incurable? (7)
 19 Room to practise your scales? (7)
 20 Sound from the near east (5)
 21 Facet of love, to change your mind (5-4)
 25 Cutting edge (7)
 26 It's evil to abuse a person (7)
 28 Go on holiday (5)
 29 Gleaning the right to be growing (9)

DOWN

- 1 Strip and run like lightning (6)
 2 Medical man dressed for a fight (6)
 3 Way out! Look it up to find your way to the city (4)
 4 Sounds like Bill's lad made it (6)
 5 According to the optimist (4-4)
 6 Kindly gave two bits of furniture (10)
 7 Chained to a ranch (8)
 8 Time for warlike activities? (8)
 14 City hosts a bloke from another (10)
 16 Sounds as if this song could be irritating (8)
 17 The original hoodie? (8)
 18 Leaped when cat drove you mad (8)
 22 Pretty nothingy (6)
 23 Bush turns up excellent accounts (6)
 24 Needs to become green: why? (6)
 27 Suitable food for artist (4)

DICTIONARY CORNER

How many words of 4 or more letters can you make out of the word

BUTTERFLY

There should be at least 35, including two musical instruments

CALL MY BLUFF

Which is the correct definition of the following?

Jarrah

- (a) Dialect word for a bartender
 (b) Bengali celebration dance
 (c) Type of eucalyptus tree

Eschscholtzia

- (a) Californian poppy
 (b) Medical condition akin to croup
 (c) Opera by the Czech composer Smetana

Wurley

- (a) Heraldic beast with large horns
 (b) Aborigines' small hut
 (c) Extra large marrow or other vegetable

NEXT NUMBER?

What is the next number in this series?
 1 3 6 11 18 29 ?

WHERE AM I IN OXFORDSHIRE?

ROOKSTEW
 AYLETTERS
 FINDFUEL
 KNIGINGOLD
 BESTRICE

See answers on page 21

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CHILTERN PLAYERS PLAY TIME

Making a Drama Out of It

Spending our free time at play – or rather plays – is what we do. We are Chiltern Players and we're a community drama group based in Sonning Common dedicated to putting on amateur dramatic productions in the local area.

We are a small friendly group with our feet on the ground but still aiming high – to put on the best productions we possibly can. We may not exactly have the resources of a West End theatre but that doesn't mean we don't put on enjoyable shows – enjoyable for audiences as well as us, that is. Or at least that's what they tell us! Hopefully you may have already come to see us at



new faces. And new members don't have to serve an apprenticeship, in fact we're more likely to give you a plum part before you can have second thoughts about joining. Only joking of course. We are a very egalitarian group though so as well as their chosen role everyone doubles as a stagehand and even the director might have to wield a broom – especially the director in fact. So, no divas. You'd probably think we actually seem quite normal!

Outside of production times, we hold play readings, usually in The Butchers Arms, which are open to anybody who fancies an entertaining (and sometimes informative) evening.

Productions are our showcase for what we do though. It's a thing of wonder that, after all the work and organisation, we can make something happen on stage that we can show and be enjoyed by the public.

So what are you waiting for? ●

Next event: community production with Sonning Common library

Murder Mystery Supper, Friday 28 February, Sonning Common Village Hall

For more information about Chiltern Players contact the wonderful Rosemary on 07512 392625 or chiltern.players@yahoo.co.uk and www.chilternplayers.co.uk. Find us also on Facebook and Twitter.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Setting the Scene

We in the Chiltern Players are a sociable bunch of people and even when not rehearsing a play will come up with reasons to get together – drama workshops, meals out, theatre trips – but if you read our article in the previous edition (which hopefully you did) you will know that putting on productions is our real raison d'être.

It's those on stage who generally take the limelight of course but it takes many more people than just 'actors' for the action to happen. A whole group of people with a wide range of skills and personalities are needed to successfully realise a production.

First, we have to find a director usually from the ranks of our existing company but who can also be 'recruited' for the occasion and, if we're lucky, a separate producer to facilitate the production. We need a stage manager to co-ordinate all the technical side, a set designer and set builders and someone who is in charge of props and costumes, plus a lighting and sound technician.

And as we want people to see the fruits of our labour it needs to be publicised

- posters have to be designed, tickets and programmes printed, notices placed in local newspapers and magazines and social media. On the performance nights we need people to sell tickets and programmes, staff the bar and organise the raffle. Only when all these things are in place can the lights dim, the curtain go up and the actors strut their stuff.

As you can see, it's all about teamwork and enthusiasm. It may sound like an awful cliché but the group becomes your drama 'family', and there is nothing like the buzz you get from seeing a play you have worked on for weeks come to life.

Sounds tempting? Why not join us? ●

Next play readings: **Wed 11 March, Wed 8 April The Butchers Arms, Sonning Common, RG4 9RS.** All welcome, do join us!

Next event: Production tba Dates **23 / 24 / 25 April 2020**

For more information about Chiltern Players contact the wonderful Rosemary on 07512 392625 or chiltern.players@yahoo.co.uk and www.chilternplayers.co.uk. Find us also on Facebook and Twitter.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Cathy Brabben



Chiltern Players Wooooo the Audience with the Canterville Ghost

Oscar Wilde's witty and warm-hearted Christmas story staged at a cosy Peppard Hall in November, made gentle fun of the English aristocracy and their American counterparts and local drama group Chiltern Players got the tone and atmosphere just right.

Set at Canterville Chase – home to the newly arrived Otis family from America but also home to Sir Simon de Canterville, a troubled ghost with a fearsome history and bloodthirsty crimes to his credit. The story explores his attempts to uphold his reputation which are thwarted by the Otis family in various ways – including tripping him up on the stairs.

Alastair Reed gave a commanding performance as Sir Simon, as his character descends from swaggering mischief to petulance and confusion. His allies are the

excellent Maggie Stokes as Mrs Umney and Miss Virginia Otis innocently played by Cathy Brabben.

Colin Silvester excelled himself with technical effects; from clanking chains to magical blood stains and snow storms. The set with its secret door to the underworld and the Tudor portraits painted by director Ian were a visual treat.

Finally, the shuddering Christmas tree should have taken a bow. It had a non-speaking part but what a star! ●

Christine Murphy



Peppard Memorial Hall where we put on productions twice a year (most recently The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde). We like to think we create a warm welcoming atmosphere for audiences and for members of the group.

Between us we can clock up a scary number of years of experience of am dram both on and off stage but we are always more than happy to welcome

HEALTH MATTERS

By SUE LITCHFIELD



PHLEBOTOMY APPOINTMENTS:

There is very high demand for our phlebotomy (blood) appointments.

Please call or email our Reception team to cancel an appointment if you cannot attend.

May we remind patients that these appointments are five minutes only and ask that you remove your coat before your appointment.

Please note that there is a lead time for blood clinic appointments with us due to the pressure on the service. Please advise our Reception team in advance if the blood test is for a hospital request, warfarin or GP request to help our staff.



Our patients can also go to RBH for blood appointments. Please see this web link for information on opening times at RBH: <https://www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/wards-and-services/blood-tests.htm>

STAFF NEWS Doctors

We will be saying goodbye and good luck to **Dr Abi Taylor** in early February. Dr Taylor has been a GP trainee with us for one year and we wish Dr Taylor all the best in the future.

A new GP trainee, **Dr Franciso Montero**, will be joining the health centre in early February on a six month placement.

Dr Montero joins our current trainee team of **Dr Phanida Fung** and **Dr Cranna Pinto**. Dr Fung and Dr Pinto are with us until August and October 2020 respectively.

Nursing and HCA team

Gemma Collins a new healthcare assistant, joined the health centre in December. Gemma undertakes a range of clinical duties including blood pressure checks, ECGs and dressings.

BREAST SCREENING UNIT FROM RBH:

The RBH breast screening unit will be in the health centre car park for approximately 7 weeks from early February 2020. We appreciate your understanding and co-operation during this time as we lose 4 staff car park spaces while the unit is here. Non-clinical staff (who do not live nearby) will park considerably on local roads for this time period and we appreciate your understanding at this time. If you are a local resident who can help us with the provision of a driveway parking space, in the day, in this time period, please contact **Andrea Tsoi** at schcreception@nhs.net. Thank you.

DID YOU KNOW?

MY NAME IS VICKY MYNOTT AND THIS YEAR I TOOK OVER TO BECOME THE NEW CHAIR OF SONNING COMMON HEALTH CENTRE PATIENT PARTICIPATION GROUP (PPG). YOU MAY NOT HAVE HEARD OF THE PPG BEFORE BUT HOPEFULLY, WITH OUR PLANS FOR 2020, YOU'LL BE HEARING ABOUT US A LOT MORE.

The role of the PPG is to be a critical friend to the Sonning Common Health Centre practice by advising them on the patient perspective and providing insight into the responsiveness and quality of their services. We also aim to encourage patients to take greater responsibility for their own and their family's health by organising events on health promotion which may benefit them. It is also the role of the PPG to find out the views of the patients and to have regular communication with the patient population.

This year the PPG will be holding information events on Diabetes and Sepsis. So keep an eye out on the Health Centre Newsletters and around the Reception for further information.

Moreover, if you have any constructive comments for the surgery or any ideas for topics for future information events please feel free to email us on schcpgg@gmail.com. We look forward to hearing from you. ●

REGISTERING AND USING ONLINE SERVICES

At Sonning Common Health Centre we use two Online Services:

• Patient Access

• NHS App

To register for Online Services:

- Bring photo ID (passport or driving licence) to a receptionist at the health centre. You will be issued with three codes that you need to register.
- Alternatively if you already have a verified NHS log in you can use this to access the NHS App.



Patient Access

This is available via the Patient Access website <https://www.patientaccess.com>

or via the Patient Access App on a smartphone, tablet or iPad.

Patients can:

- book and manage appointments online
- order repeat prescriptions
- access some of their medical record information, if approved by a doctor



NHS App

This is an App on a smartphone, a tablet or an iPad

Patients can:

- book and manage appointments online
- order repeat prescriptions
- access some of their medical record information, if approved by a doctor
- check symptoms
- register to be an organ donor

<http://www.nhs.uk/nhsapp>

There will be Digital Helper volunteers running online services information sessions at Sonning Common Library from 10am till 11.30am on Thursday mornings, in February. Other times may be available to suit. Please phone the library on 0118 9722448 to book a time slot. **It is essential to have registered for Online Services at the Health Centre first for Patient Access. Please bring the codes you are given with you to the library. This is not necessary if you only want to use the NHS App and already have a NHS log in.**

Come along to one of these information sessions if you need:

- help to get started
- access to a computer (or bring your own tablet, laptop or phone)

For more information, please ask at Sonning Common Health Centre or Sonning Common Library.

PATIENT ACCESS PHARMACY APPOINTMENTS CLARIFICATION

This is a private (paid for) service from your Pharmacist. The price you will be quoted is for your consultation and testing. If the tests show you need antibiotics, there is an extra charge for these which is about the same cost as an NHS prescription charge £9.00 at present. You may be able to get antibiotics from your GP on the NHS if you fulfil certain criteria. Generally antibiotics are best avoided and they will not treat viral infections, which are the cause of most winter illnesses.

Consultations for only a few conditions are offered by Day Lewis in Sonning Common and these are generally for emergency medication/treatment. These are as listed below, they cost from about £10 upwards. You will get an exact price when you book the appointment online for the required condition.

1. Erectile Dysfunction
2. Asthma
3. Emergency Contraception
4. Period Delay
5. Smoking Cessation
6. Weight Loss
7. Hair loss
8. Hay Fever
9. Private Flu Vaccination for those not otherwise eligible on the NHS

WHERE AM I?
The two musical instruments are flute and lyre
CALL MY BLUFF:
Jarrah (c)
Eschscholtzia (a)
Wurley (b)
NEXT NUMBER:
42 (add the next prime number each time)

S	C	Z	W	H	C	H	T
T	H	O	W	A	S	I	N
R	A	W	L	L	A	C	U
E	M	B	R	Y	O	S	F
A	A	A	O	F	I	E	S
K	A	T	H	W	A	N	D
D	E	N	U	T	U	N	E
A	A	D	A	L	A	A	A
C	H	R	O	N	I	C	L
A	A	A	C	A	L	L	.
N	E	I	G	H	V	O	L
T	N	C	I	S	O	R	I
C	O	T	T	E	K	C	R
L	E	A	V	E	N	L	A
E	A	A	R	G	I	N	G
E	T	R	D	Y	A	A	Y

Puzzle answers:
WOMBAT 1

NEW YEAR

By **LYNDSAY HENDERSON**



Recycle

The Library, Primary School and Pre-School have lots of recycling bins for batteries, milk bottle tops and printer cartridges, pens, crisp packets, pringle tubes, beauty



products and oral health care products so collect up these items that would have gone in landfill and bring them to be recycled instead. You could even consider collecting plastic milk bottle tops in your workplace as well! ●



Happy New Year! This month, I'd like to share a list of some local resources and shops that are perfect if you are looking at reduce, reuse and recycle more in 2020.

NEWS

In December we had our first Plastic Free Sonning Common meet up for the community, local businesses joined the team at Heath and Watkins for mulled wine and mince pies to find out more about how going plastic free could help their business. Our next event will be on 8 February 2020 at the Village Hall in collaboration with the Sonning Common Women's Institute, do look out for posters around the village to find out more.

NEW YEAR ECO TIPS

Reduce

Save plastic waste and refill your cleaning and bathroom products and more at Heath and Watkins, take along your empty washing up bottle and the lovely staff will fill up your bottles for you. Both Willow Basket in Henley and True Food Co-op in Emmer Green sell pulses, grains and other food products loose so you can take along your own tubs to fill up.

Reuse

If you are having a clear out, use websites like Freecycle and Freecycle to see if you can pass on instead of landfill. You can buy clothes, toys and more second hand at CCA in the village.

APPLY NOW FOR RIGHT TO REMAIN IN UK – CITIZENS ADVICE

If you are a European Union citizen living or working in the UK, you might be wondering what will happen when the United Kingdom leaves the EU and what you should do so that you have the right to remain in this country.

The government has set up a programme called the EU Settlement Scheme which is intended for you. There is no charge for applying to this scheme. Citizens of Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland can also apply. It is important that you apply NOW, without waiting until the UK actually leaves. You can begin the process here: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families/applying-for-settled-status>



If your application is successful you will be able to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021. You will also have the right to work in the UK, use the National Health Service, get access to benefits and pensions if you are eligible, and travel in and out of the country. There is more information about your rights on the government website. ●

Check the Citizens Advice website at: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/immigration/staying-in-the-uk-after-brex>

**citizens
advice**

South Oxfordshire District Council also has up-to-date advice on www.southoxon.gov.uk/brexit

You can visit Citizens Advice in person or call us on Adviceline (0300 330 9042). For locations of offices and opening hours see www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale

WINTER WARMTH CAMPAIGN

Housing affects health. There are services and funds out there that can help people (owners and private tenants) stay independent, safe and well in their homes. For more information or to make a referral visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs

Do you know someone who needs help with home repairs? There are organisations across Oxfordshire who can provide services to help keep them independent, safe and well in

their homes. For more information or to make a referral visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs

Are you struggling with home repairs? Regardless of where you live in Oxfordshire as an owner or private tenant, you can report any housing condition problem and get help from organisations in your area. For more information or to make a referral visit www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/homerepairs



FREE WORKSHOP

Awareness of invasive species and Biosecurity

TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2020

The workshop will consist of a morning and an afternoon session and will focus on raising awareness on up and coming invasive species across the Midlands region. Aspects covered will include identification, recording and reporting of these species, and on a variety of biosecurity measures, and constructing a biosecurity plan. Workshop participants will be provided with materials on Invasive Non-Native Species of concern, including ID sheets and biosecurity posters.

Tea/coffee and a light lunch (sandwich and snack) will be provided.

If you wish to attend, please email Tarik.Bodasing@wkwt.org.uk or book a ticket via the Eventbrite link below.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/copy-of-alert-priority-invasive-non-native-species-and-biosecurity-tickets-84744945413> ●



Church *news*

ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

During Advent and the Christmas season St Michael's parish supported the work of the Reading foodbank, Readifood and further afield Embrace the Middle East in its work with the most marginalised people in that area. On 19 January 2020 St Michael's was delighted to host this year's ecumenical service during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The service was developed by the churches in Malta and took as its theme the shipwreck of St Paul on Malta. To help us engage with the nautical theme a couple of boats were brought into the church. A rather unusual occurrence for us!

An important part of the life of the Christian is to try and take the time to listen to the 'still small voice of God'. However, it is not always easy with the increasing number of gadgets that are intended to keep us 'connected' and so distract us. With this in mind, we hold a Holy Hour (7-8pm) on the first Monday of each month. This is a time for quiet prayer and reflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Everyone is welcome for just a few minutes or the full hour. During Lent this will become a weekly event beginning Monday 2nd March. ●

Beginning of Lent

Ash Wednesday Masses including the distribution of ashes:

Tuesday 25 February Vigil Mass at 7pm

Wednesday 26 February 9am at St Martin's school and

12 noon at St Michael's.

Our Easter services will be advertised in the next issue of this magazine but check our website for any Lent talks we might be holding.

We continue our weekly visits to the housebound and the local care homes. If you know a housebound Catholic who would like to receive Holy Communion please let us know. ●

For up to date information check the weekly newsletter on our website: www.saintmichaelsonningcommon.org.uk

SPRINGWATER CHURCH

We all pray you have a happy, healthy and blessed 2020.

The carols by candlelight service was absolutely wonderful and over 100 people had a very special start to their Christmas celebrations. The children were particularly enchanting. By the time you read this we will have had our New

Year Brunch and walk at the church - always very popular!

At the time of writing our pastors, Kevin and Linsey Potter are in Colorado combining a well-earned holiday with a visit to Linsey's Mum, who is very ill, and we are all praying that the chemotherapy is effective and that she makes a full recovery.

We look forward to welcoming you to our warm, friendly Sunday morning services and for coffee and a chat afterwards, we start at 10.30am. ●

www.springwaterchurch.org.uk

Chris Girdler

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday 6 March 2020

6.30 pm

Springwater Congregational Church,
Blounts Court Road, Sonning Common.
Berkshire RG9

Prepared by the Christian women of Zimbabwe the theme is "Rise Take Your Mat and Walk"

The service will last an hour and will include a live weblink to Zimbabwe, followed by supper. All are welcome, not just women, and we look forward to seeing you there.

Claire Tier

OBITUARIES

DAVE BREWER



Dave Brewer, who died recently, was born and bred in Sonning Common and spent his 82 years in the village. His parents and aunts and uncles lived in the village as well but the family is not related to the Brewers that used to run the butcher's shop. Dave worked in the Post Office in Henley, where he met his wife Joyce, and then later in the Reading office. They had three daughters, one of whom lives in Sonning Common with her family. The other two are not far away.

The word sprightly might have been coined for Dave. He was a very active and friendly man who put his all into anything that he had committed to, such as helping prepare for the Horticultural Society Shows. He was the "go to" man if anyone wanted to know something relating to the history of the village. For 30 years he was the village Scout Leader and it gave him great pleasure that one of his granddaughters is now an active scout. He was very interested in things horticultural and as well as being treasurer of the Chiltern Edge Horticultural Society, also for 30 years, he curated a collection of almost 100 clematis in his garden which was opened to the public under the National Gardens Scheme two or three times a year, raising money for charities. When the Police Office required helpers he was one of the first to volunteer and he was active in the trust that established the Millennium Green. Dave also delivered the Sonning Common

Magazine, a tradition now carried on by Joyce and his daughter Lyn Thompson.

One of Dave's great uncles owned the house in Green Lane with the Nissen hut in the garden in which the uncle made coffins!

Few people can have done more than Dave to contribute to the community that is Sonning Common. He will be greatly missed and our sympathy goes to Joyce and the other family members in their loss. ●

Geoff Adams

JUDY PITSON



Judy was a great and loving supporter of her family and always greeted friends and acquaintances with a welcoming smile. In addition to her family commitments she was extremely active in our community. David Pinder, writing for members of the Tennis Club, says "Judy was the Treasurer of our club for as long as I can remember managing the finances and the membership. I remember her approaching me over twenty five years ago as she needed help running the club, which she was doing single handedly at the time, and it was only fairly recently after being taken ill that she finally decided to step aside." She was also a stalwart and secretary of the Sonning Common Society for a long time and probably 15 years ago, while secretary and hosting proof readings for this magazine persuaded Geoff Adams to join the committee and eventually to take on as secretary and chairman. In

working life she was bursar at Chiltern Edge School.

For relaxation she was a strong supporter of Reading Football Club and was a very gifted artist producing paintings in watercolour and oil. She leaves husband Stuart, a former head of Sonning Common Primary School and 3 children and 11 grandchildren. ●

Geoff Adams

PAULA HUMM



This time of year is always hard for those who lose loved ones. Paula left her husband and two sons in December after a long and very courageous fight against cancer, that eventually took her away. She was a primary school teacher for most of her adult life and so enjoyed being with children that she also helped out with the Guide movement for many years too. Her love of music was passed on to her son, and also to many of the pupils at school where she led the choir and taught guitar.

Paula was also my friend and we spent many an afternoon over the past couple of years, when she could no longer walk very far or go out, in her garden or lounge gossiping, chatting and laughing about all sorts of things. I am sure she had her down times, but mostly she amazed me with her positiveness, strength and determination to ignore being ill and carry on with life as best she could.

She will be greatly missed... ●

Christine Atkinson

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SC MAGAZINE

AFTER A MINI-MAKEOVER, THE BIRD IN HAND IS BACK OPEN!!

I took over the pub at the end of September. Moving here from South East London, where I worked as a supply teacher. Running a pub was something I had talked about with my husband for some time, making plans but never taking that final step. This year just felt the right time to start, a new education!

I had viewed a few pubs both in London and Surrey, but there was always something missing. On my first visit, I knew the Bird was the pub I wanted to run, there was just something really special about the place. I could picture people spending time sitting by the fire in winter having picked a book or a game from the shelf or after a long (or short) walk. Then when I saw the potential of the garden, the ideas started and before I knew it I was planning ahead for next summer! After a quick look around the picturesque village, it was a done deal, this was the pub for me!

The starting point was getting the pub ready to open its doors with a mini makeover; we've updated the entrance bar area and brightened up the dining room where you can enjoy our locally sourced menu. The space means we can

also host larger groups for birthdays and celebrations.

Since opening our doors on the 15th November, the team and I have had the pleasure of welcoming people from near and far, and of course our four-legged friends. It was never going to be plain sailing opening a pub, but we have been so touched by the welcome we have received from the locals. It's reminded me that this was the best decision I could have made to see out 2019.

Our aim is for the Bird to be at the heart of the community; a real home-from-home. Our starting point is to ensure we serve food made from locally sourced, sustainable ingredients, including from Carl Wood's Butchers and Belchers.

We have lots of exciting plans for the Bird in 2020, including a weekly Thursday Quiz night starting on the 9 January at 8pm.

As an avid book lover, I like nothing better than reading a book with a glass of Pinot, so we will also be starting a monthly evening book club. Keep checking our website and the Facebook page for updates! The hardest part has been picking the first book!

As we head into 2020 the makeover continues. We will be updating and opening two en-suite rooms to welcome guests and the toilets will get their own makeover, including baby-changing facilities.

Keep up to date with our journey at the Bird and of course, find some fabulous food offers during the year via our website www.birdinhandsonningcommon.co.uk. And also on Twitter and Instagram @birdinhand_sc and our Facebook page Bird in Hand Sonning Common. Or call us on 07716 925762.

We look forward to greeting you and your four-legged friends soon! ●

Helen & the Team



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OUR SCHOOL

These stories are written by Year 2 children, aged 6 or 7

I feel lucky that our school has a forest school.

It's fun, playful, warm and cosy.

You can play games and see wildlife.

I feel happy when I go to forest school.

You can make a den with sticks.

We have hot chocolate and biscuits.

It's a lovely place to be, I wish every school had a forest school. ●

by Ella-Lily Briginshaw

Once upon a time there was a little boy named Alfie and he really loved computing. He was obsessed with electricals and wouldn't stop asking if he could play on the iPad. Once he was in a really exciting computing lesson. He was playing 'Friend Your Own Alien.' He had found a little green one and had made friends with it instantly. Suddenly the whole ICT Suite rumbled and the roof opened up to let the aliens from Alfie's video game come in. Soon the whole class had a pet Alien. They took the aliens to school because the aliens were good at maths! Once James's Alien got

some pens and scribbled in someone's carpet space. Then the Alien got a blue code (that means that the Alien has to stay in at break) poor old James he didn't have anyone to play with. So Alfie asked him if he wanted to play with him and his Alien. ●

By Alfie Howard-De La Mare

Once upon a time I was going to Forest Camp. I was running when I tripped over a lizard. It was my pet Fred. We had a pet marshmallow too.

They were on a mystery you know, me and my pets. Next, we climbed a tree. I love climbing trees at forest camp. The tree's mouth opened and we fell through. Then we discovered there was a baddie! It was red and green with sunglasses on. Silly isn't it?

"Snack time," said Mrs Jones.

"Whoopee!" I said. It was toasted bread and marshmallows.

Then the red and green thing burst through the trees. The monster turned into a dragon. It charged at us but a witch appeared. It was standing under a

tree. A puff of leaves came from the tree and the witch disappeared. The witch had put a spell on my friend to turn her into the dragon. She turned back into a person when the witch disappeared, so that was a mystery solved. ●

By Lily Howard-De La Mare

Our School is a special place. I like maths because we do multiplications and adding and partitioning. My teachers are really funny, one fell off her chair and landed on her bottom. My best thing at school is when I go out to play and I play football and active leaders at breaktime. I am really looking forward to the Nativity play and the Christmas Fair. ●

By Joe Skilton



GARDENING THE OXFORD WAY

AN EVENING WITH THE CHILTERN EDGE HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

It may be wondered why Oxford should have any different gardening from much of the rest of the UK. Robert Longstaff told an enthralled audience of the Society at their November meeting just what he meant by the term. Essentially it means no dig organic production from beds that are narrow enough to be worked from the side, meaning no treading on them, and mixing a variety of plants to minimise pest infestation.

Robert started his own garden near Abingdon in 1981 and the beds have not been dug since just compost added each year. He helped establish the Oxford Garden Project in 2000. It aims to develop techniques and to encourage others to establish productive, organic low input gardens.

Ideas the project are investigating include forest gardening where trees were spread thinly so that flowering plants could flourish in the gaps, wild life gardening, composting methods and effective utilisation of the food produced. Heritage varieties usually have a wider harvest window than modern varieties which have been bred primarily for commercial crop production and hence uniform ripening.

Discussing his own garden management Robert described how he was able to push a 4ft bamboo cane almost to its full length in his beds. Camomile is grown because it flowers early in the year and so attracts pollinating insects ready for the productive crops. He does not favour a rigid rotation but does mix different species. As an example he showed a row of carrots sandwiched between a row of garlic and a row of onions to confuse the pests.

Robert stated that it was "proved" plants communicated with one another and so could warn their neighbour when they were being attacked. Possibly the mycorrhiza in the soil, that could stretch for 4 miles (yes this is what he said), were the mechanism for this. Other suggestions for effective gardening were to sit with a bare bottom on the soil to see if it was warm enough for planting (perhaps not on the allotment!) and plant potatoes snuggled into the soil surface and covered with fresh grass clippings. Specialist potato bags are not necessary for container grown crops; compost bags pierced at the bottom were just as good and cheaper. Two or three potatoes per bag and bags placed quite close together

allowed even a small area to produce a useful crop. Planting the side shoots of tomatoes and then cutting off the parent plant above two trusses allows one plant to produce a good crop of ripe tomatoes all through the season.

He finished by reminding members that they should use all gardening products correctly according to the label.

After answering several questions the meeting closed with a general conclusion that this had been an absolutely fascinating evening and Robert stayed on talking to members until the lights were turned off. Personally I am not convinced that organic production is the best way to garden but I do agree that chemicals must be used sparingly, with care and according to label recommendations. More information on Robert's ideas is on line - Google Robert Longstaff or The Oxford Garden Project. CEHS has monthly meetings during the winter and interesting visits in the summer. New members welcome. For more information visit www.cehs.co.uk. ●

Geoffrey Adams

Parish news

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MEMORIAL HALL FIELD

The Memorial Hall Field has seen a number of changes in recent months. The hedging along Reade's Lane from the central entrance behind Kidmore End Hall has all been thinned and trimmed and the areas beneath have all been cleared. Debris and rubbish has been removed and a new fence has been erected behind Kidmore End Memorial Hall to ensure security.

The electricity cable which traverses the land is now sunk underground in deep trenches and since this has been completed, the final clearance can take place in drier weather.

Planning permission was submitted for initial groundworks in order to keep the project moving forward, with further investigation to be made into drainage requirements.

The clearance of dead vegetation behind the Memorial Hall has provided a marvellous view of the site from the back of the hall. The next phase is to determine the exact layout of the site, bearing in mind maintenance costs, security and the need for key utilities (power, water, drainage to be installed).

The Working Group have also taken advice from Highways Consultants on the potential access for pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

In particular, the preparation of the field for Easter and Summer Fun is a key objective.

Easter and Summer Fun

We are delighted to report that the National Lottery Community Fund has provided a grant for us not only to continue but to extend the popular Summer Fun activities so we can now announce that there will be Easter AND Summer Fun, taking place on the following dates:

Easter Fun

Tuesday 7 April
Thursday 9 April
Tuesday 14 April
Thursday 16 April

Summer Fun

Tuesday 28, Wednesday 29,
Thursday 30 July
Tuesday 4, Wednesday 5, Thursday 6 August
Tuesday 18, Wednesday 19,
Thursday 20 August
Tuesday 25, Wednesday 26,
Thursday 27 August

Timings will be 10-12 and 1-3 as before. More details will follow.

Watch out for notices about the possibility of May Half term action mornings and an Xplorer event in February half term. We will send information out on social media as soon as it is available.

VE AND VJ DAY CELEBRATIONS

The Spring Bank Holiday has been moved to Friday 8 May to mark the 75th anniversary of the actual end date of WWII in Europe and to assist those wishing to hold commemorative celebrations on that day/weekend.

Likewise Saturday 15 August is the anniversary of the end of WWII in the Far East with Japan – the forgotten war – which is also very worthy of commemoration/celebration.

The Parish Council would like to support any groups who want to organise VE or VJ day events and applications for supporting grants can be made via our website.

VILLAGE CENTRE WORKING PARTY

We've now approved Peter Brett Associates final plans for the village centre and are working with them to produce detailed costing for the scheme. We'll also be holding an Open Day, tentatively arranged for Saturday 2nd May at the Village Hall to discuss these plans in more detail and we encourage everyone to come along.

Stuart Howe

ENVIROMENTAL WORKING PARTY

The Parish Council has formed a committee to oversee maintenance and ongoing public access to the 6 acres of Old Copse not managed by the Woodland Trust. Widmore Pond will also be incorporated within the same scheme. Before any work proceeds on either site professional advice is to be taken.

John Stoves
EWP Chairman

Sonning Common Parish Council
Parish Office, Village Hall, Wood Lane, Sonning Common RG4 9SL
T: 0118 972 3616

E: clerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk (Philip Collings)
deputyclerk@sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk (Ros Varnes)
W: www.sonningcommonparishcouncil.org.uk
Reminder to all readers to use the Parish website for information

TOM FORT ALONE

We were twenty-one for Christmas dinner. The noise was tremendous, the intensity of jaw action – both talking and disposing of the food – was on an epic scale.

But now, in dramatic contrast, I am alone (apart from Meg the dog, still with us, still with certain behavioural issues) and the house is as quiet as the grave. The rest of the family are off for four days skiing. And, much as I love them, their absence has – how can I put this tactfully? – its plus side.

I can eat a kipper without being blasted for stinking the house out. I can watch the highlights of the test match in South Africa without being asked when supper will be ready. I can wolf as many of the Xmas chocolates as I like without being

castigated as a greedy hog. I can hum to my heart's content and crack walnut shells all over the kitchen table.

Better still than the freedom to behave slightly badly is the silence. No girls arguing over which one left what detritus in the bathroom. No animated discussion over who borrowed which top and where is it now? No pointed slamming of kitchen cupboard doors left open. No shouted instructions to hang the washing.

The house is orderly. All the lights that should be off are off. All the plates and mugs normally distributed around various rooms are where they should be, in the kitchen. All right, I confess to having left muddy

footprints on the stairs, and the cushions on the sofa are all over the place, and the washing has not been sorted. But all that will be dealt with, I promise.

Yes, of course I miss them. Sort of. In theory. They're back the day after tomorrow. Between ourselves, that's a bit too soon. Four days is not enough – next time they need a week, or even ten days. Much better for the skiing, don't you agree? ●



COOK'S CORNER

By SANDY ONOFRIO

An extremely easy and filling dish that the whole family can enjoy

JOLLOF RICE – serves 8



- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 2 (400g) tins tomatoes
- 80g tomato puree
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon dried red chilli flakes
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 475ml water
- 8 chicken pieces
- 185g uncooked white rice

- 3 carrots, diced
- 225g fresh fine green beans, trimmed and snapped in half
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Pour oil into large saucepan. Cook onion until translucent. Stir in tomatoes, puree and season with salt, black pepper, cayenne pepper, red chilli flakes, Worcestershire sauce and rosemary. Cover, and bring to the boil. Reduce heat, stir in water, and add chicken pieces. Simmer for 30 minutes. Stir in rice, carrots and green beans, and season with nutmeg. Bring to the boil, reduce heat to low and simmer until the chicken is fork-tender and the rice is cooked, approx. 30 minutes. ●



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DIARY DATES

FEBRUARY 2020

Tuesday 4

2 - 3.30pm

Late Spring Bereavement Support Group. Fish Volunteer Centre

Wednesday 5

10.30am - 12noon

Coffee Morning SC WI: Open to all. Village Hall

Monday 10

2.30pm

FISH - Tea party. Village Hall

Tuesday 11

2.30pm

CEHS "Beautiful Borders" by John Negus. Peppard Memorial Hall

Monday 17

8pm

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Tuesday 18

12.30pm

Snack and chat lunch. St Michael's Church Hall

Tuesday 18

2 - 3.30pm

Late Spring Bereavement Support Group. Fish Volunteer Centre

Thursday 20

11.30am

FISH - Pub lunch

Thursday 20

7.30pm

WI "The Rhyme of our Lives", a talk by Jean Hill. Village Hall

Wednesday 26

7.45pm

Henley Philatelic Society - Auction viewing. Bix Village Hall

Thursday 27

FISH - Henley Farmers' Market

The FISH Volunteer Centre runs regular door-to-door shopping trips to Henley and Reading every month. The programme of shopping and leisure trips is published and distributed on 20th of the preceding month. Copies of the programme are available from the FISH Office, the Library and the CCA shop and posted on all village noticeboards. If you would like to receive a regular copy by email please send the message 'bus programme please' with your name to busmanager@fishvolunteercentre.org.uk

The programme is also posted on the FISH website www.fishvolunteercentre.org.uk

To book any trip call **0118 972 3986** any weekday between 09.30 and 11.30 a.m.

Friday 28

8pm

"Murder Most Fowl" - murder mystery supper. Village Hall

MARCH 2020

Tuesday 3

2 - 3.30pm

Late Spring Bereavement Support Group. Fish Volunteer Centre

Wednesday 4

10.30am - 12noon

Coffee Morning SC WI. Open to all. Village Hall

Monday 9

2.30pm

FISH Tea party. Village Hall

Tuesday 10

7.30pm

CEHS: "Asters (Symphytorichums) history and propagation" by Jacqueline Aviolet. Peppard Memorial Hall

Monday 16

8pm

Sonning Common Parish Council. Village Hall

Tuesday 17

12.30pm

Snack and chat lunch. St Michael's Church Hall

Tuesday 17

2 - 3.30pm

Late Spring Bereavement Support Group. Fish Volunteer Centre

Thursday 19

11.30am

FISH - Pub lunch

Friday 20

7.30pm

Women's Institute: AGM followed by Quiz. Village Hall

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